

## **We all Live Downstream - Water Conservation Works**

### **Drinking Water Week – May 1 -7, 2016**

Drinking Water Week is an opportunity to recognize the vital role water plays in our daily lives and is celebrated each year during the first full week of May. Drinking Water Week is a time set aside each year to make people more aware of the benefits of tap water. A safe, reliable water supply is critical to the success of any community. We often take our water resources for granted unless we are living through a drought or flood. Water plays a vital role in our daily lives.

### **How you can Take Action!**

**There are many ways to help conserve and protect our drinking water:**

#### **How you can conserve water and prevent water pollution outdoors:**

- Plant trees and plants along a stream on your property to slow down storm water runoff and allow it to soak into the ground before it reaches the stream.
- Plant native grasses, flowers and trees on your property to enhance beauty, create habitat for wildlife and reduce the need for water, fertilizers and pesticides.
- Construct a rain garden in your yard.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water, then use that water to water plants.
- Water wisely: water during cooler parts of the day (late evening and early morning). Water slowly and evenly with 1 to 1½ inches of water per week so that moisture soaks down to the roots. If it doesn't grow, don't water it!
- Use a broom (not water) to clean driveways, sidewalks and other hard surfaces.
- Cover exposed soil in your garden or landscaped areas with mulch or hay to prevent soil erosion and moisture loss.
- Dispose of used oil and household chemicals properly. Do not dump oil or hazardous chemicals onto the ground.
- Do not dump anything down a storm drain. Storm drains can discharge directly to a local stream or lake.
- Clean up after pets. Pet droppings that are washed into the storm drain system contaminate the water flowing to creeks and rivers.
- Join with friends and family to help in a community stream or river cleanup.

Everyday activities at homes, businesses, schools, and farms can be significant sources of pollutants to drinking water. When we understand that drinking water comes from rainfall either seeping through the land surface to an underground aquifer, or running off the land surface to a nearby stream, we can take steps to help minimize the risk of contamination from activities on the land surface.

**How you can conserve water and prevent water pollution in-doors:**

- Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth. Save over a gallons of water every time you brush your teeth by turning off the tap.
- Take quick showers instead of baths. Baths can use 36 gallons of water. A quick shower under a low-flow showerhead uses only 12 gallons. That's 24 gallons you can save every day!
- Fix leaking faucets or tell an adult that a faucet is leaking - a tiny leak in your bathroom faucet can waste as much as 70 gallons of water a day.
- Do not flush medicines down the toilet. These pharmaceuticals can enter downstream waters. Properly dispose of your expired or unused pharmaceuticals at area drop-off events.

Conserving our drinking water is just as important as protecting it from contaminants. That is why it is so important to think about how we use the water that comes from our taps. One person can make a difference. By making small changes, we can make our environment better. We can also encourage our friends, relatives, and neighbors to help conserve drinking water and prevent pollution.

**Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!**

**For more information call or write:**

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